The total debt from the World Bank sources as at end December 1999 is as under :—

	US$ billion
IDA Credits	18.71
IBRD Loans	5.77
Total	24.48

[No separate component of the above is classified as high cost in view of the above.]

(e) and (f) This is reviewed on a continuing basis to reduce overall debt burden.

Financial Assistance to H.P. for Enhancing Irrigation Sector

3882. SHRI ANIL SHARMA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have considered a proposal to give financial assistance to Himachal Pradesh for enhancing the irrigation sector under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the amount of assistance given; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to enhance the irrigation facilities in the State ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL) : (a) and (b) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has reported that it has sanctioned projects for enhancing the irrigation sector in Himachal Pradesh with financial assistance out of Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF). The details of the sanctions and dibursements under RIDF for Himachal Pradesh, as reported by NABAD, as on 31st March, 2000 are as under :

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sr. No.	Tranche	Irrigation Projects	Amount Sanctioned	Disbursement
1.	RIDF-I	77	1422.71	1422.71
2.	RIDF-II	64	2508.09	2439.65
3.	RIDF-III	19	369.63	367.33
4.	RIDF-IV	22	704.91	344.25
5.	RIDF-V	199	2817.73	190.39
	TOTAL	381	7823.07	4764.33

(c) Information regarding the steps taken by the State Government in enhancing the irrigation facilities in the State of Himachal Pradesh are not available. However, NABARD has been providing assistance in sustainable exploitation of available water under Minor Irrigation schemes in the country and have taken several steps which include, *inter-alia*;

(i) Lower interest rate for refinance to banks for minor irrigation;

(ii) Increase in the quantum of refinance to commercial banks to a maximum of 90%;

(iii) Advising the banks to provide financial assistance to farmers for installation of drip and sprinkler system;

(iv) Providing supplementary loan for rectification of existing pumpsets.

Increasing strength of Central Government Staff

3883. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA : SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether staff strength of the Central Government are increasing despite promise of downsizing;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the concrete steps proposed to be taken to cut administrative expenditure ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL) : (a) and (b) The actual strength as on 1-3-98 was 37,86,865, whereas the same as on 1-3-99 was 37,45,664 showing a net reduction of 41,201 and not increase in the strength.

(c) The austerity measures taken by the Government include ban on creation of posts, reduction in number of sanctioned posts, restrictions on filling up of vacant posts, reduction in office expenses, restrictions on purchase of vehicles, restrictions on foreign travel and on entertainment/ hospitality expenses, etc.